

Dear Home Educator:

Section 20-5-111 of the Montana Code lists the following as rights and responsibilities of a parent who provides home school and the rights of the child in the home school.

Subject to the provisions of 20-5-109, a parent has the authority to instruct his child, stepchild, or ward in a home school and is solely responsible for

1. the educational philosophy of the home school;
2. the selection of instructional materials, curriculum, and textbooks;
3. the time, place, and method of instruction; and
4. the evaluation of the home school instruction.

In accordance with Section 20-5-109, MCA, a nonpublic school shall

1. maintain records on pupil attendance and disease immunization and make the records available to the County Superintendent on request;
2. shall provide the minimum aggregate hours of pupil instruction in accordance with 20-1-301 and 20-1-302;
3. be housed in a building that complies with applicable local health and safety regulations;
4. provide an organized course of study that includes instruction in the subjects required of public schools; as a basic instructional program pursuant in 20-7-111.
5. in the case of home schools, shall notify the County Superintendent of Schools, of the county in which the home school is located, in each school fiscal year of the student's attendance at the school.

By choosing to educate your child at home, you have assumed the complex role of teacher, registrar, record keeper, and selector of textbooks and curriculum. If you need help, you can contact the two home school networks and the county superintendent's office. We do have available some curriculum guidelines and offer a registration card that gives you a discount at some bookstores and area businesses in Bozeman. This packet has been put together to help you. It is divided into six parts:

1. Home School Report

This notification form is to be submitted to the county superintendent's office annually, preferably between July and early October. The information in the box at the bottom of the page must be completed. Also, you may give your child's name, birth date, and grade; however, that information is optional. We only use this information for statistics and for any letters you may need verifying that your child was home schooled. If the military or any educational institution requests verification of home school attendance, we can accommodate that request only if the name and grade have been supplied. This will be done upon your request.

2. Federal Government Programs

This page is to be completed when you notify us. Federal law requires that these programs be offered to everyone, so please sign the Notification of Opportunity to Participate form even if you do not want to take advantage of them. In order to benefit from any program except special education during the next school year, the form must be returned by October. Brief explanations of available programs are included.

- If you do NOT complete this form, the school district in which you live is required to send a copy to you by registered mail.
- If you check NO, you will not receive any further notification of federal programs until you tell us differently.
- If you check that you do wish to be notified, a participation form will be sent you in the spring by the school district.

3. Attendance Record

According to Section 20-5-109 cited above and Sections 20-1-301 and 20-1-303 MCA, all nonpublic schools must provide the minimum aggregate hours:

- 360 hours for kindergarten
- 720 hours for grades 1-3
- 1080 hours for grades 4-12

Please submit your attendance records to the office at the end of each year or when you notify us the following year. We have included a form that may be used.

4. Home School Groups

- Gallatin Valley Home Educators' newsletter subscription information and 2006-07 volunteer list. If this is not included in your packet, call us for a copy. Volunteer list is usually available August 1.
- The directions for accessing Bozeman Home School Networks' webpage and volunteer list are included.

5. Websites and Resource Books

Look up "curriculum for school subjects" and "Distance Learning" to get to websites that will help you choose your curriculum. Books about home schooling are available in our office to check out.

6. Montana Content Standards and Benchmarks

These are the standards for each content area taught in the public schools. The benchmarks show where students should be at the end of 4th, 8th, and 12th grades. Included in the packet are standards for reading, literature, and writing. Other subjects may be accessed by visiting www.opi.mt.gov. Then go to "Programs and Services of OPI" and scroll down to "Accreditation" then go to "Content Standards." Click on the content area in which you are interested.

I hope that you will consider me a resource person to help make your job easier. If you have any questions, please feel free to phone, fax, or e-mail. I applaud your efforts and determination to conscientiously teach your children at home. Education is extremely important for all children, and the child is what education is all about.

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